

Good afternoon, Co-Chair Osten, Co-Chair Walker, ranking members Miner and France and the entire Appropriations Committee

My name is Johanna Schubert and I'm testifying today in support of allocation of funds through DSS to support Public Act 21-36 AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES UNDER MEDICAID.

I work at Hartford Communities that Care (HCTC). A nonprofit located in the North End of Hartford. Our agency works directly with gunshot victims and their families using the evidence based best practices model, Hospital Violence Intervention or HVIP. This model engages with the victim and their family right after an injury, often at bedside in the hospital where research has shown there is a "golden moment" to build a relationship and change outcomes. Our team of front line Violence Prevention Professionals alongside case managers and other staff work holistically with families. We connect families with trauma-informed and culturally aware mental health services, in-home nursing and doctor visits, support through any justice involvement and in worst case scenarios, funerals and family support after loss of life. Hartford Communities that Care, along with its hospital partner Saint Francis have provided this opportunity for support to over 1,800 victims since its partnership began in 2004. The HCTC and Saint Francis partnership was the first HVIP to be recognized in the state of Connecticut by the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (The HAVI).

I want to thank the Legislature for understanding the importance of this work and for supporting HB 5677, now Public act 21-36. This bill was passed unanimously out of the Public Health Committee, the House and then then Senate last year. Since it's passage, conversations with DSS on the logistics of Medicaid Support for Certified VPPs have been ongoing and productive. We look forward to being able to collaboratively lay the foundation to compensate these hard working individuals who choose to make violence prevention a career.

We have sent the members of this committee a packet before this hearing with four documents we feel give a comprehensive snapshot of why funding Violence Prevention through Medicaid is a sound financial move for the state, they are;

1. **A fact sheet on HVIP** with more information on how this best practice works to address the public health issue of community gun violence
2. **An ROI study** of 82 victims in Hartford showing Medicaid reaps \$8.88 for every \$1.00 invested by state health agencies. Total taxpayer return increases to \$12.32 for every \$1.00 invested when increased tax revenue and decreased public assistance is added to Medicaid savings.
3. **A snapshot** of Hartford area hospital data from 2021 showing that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of gunshot victims are medicaid patients. This tracks with national data
4. **A link to the report of The Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Committee** convened in 2021 through SB1 which brought together experts across the spectrum of gun violence prevention to make recommendations to bring rates of violence down.

Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.